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Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

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AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/462, A/48/476, A/48/484; A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3, L.4; E/1993/50/Rev.1)

1. Ms. HJERTAAS (Norway) said that young people, who made up more than half of the inhabitants of the planet, were, in many countries and for various reasons, obliged to wait longer until they were taken into consideration as full members of society.

2. The current period was characterized by unprecedented political change with the end of the cold war, progress in South Africa and the conclusion of the Washington agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Governments had a duty to support those positive developments by providing the United Nations with the resources it needed.

3. Furthermore, countries must meet their political responsibilities with regard to young people by enabling them to participate in preparing their own future. Young people had a contribution to make by informing leaders of their concerns and their vision of the future. Admittedly, young people were not a homogeneous group. It was for that reason that cooperation at the international and national levels between young people's organizations, and tolerance and solidarity, were so important. In spite of differences between living standards, political opinions, religious belief and ethnic origin, young people throughout the world shared common ideas such as the rejection of war and love of peace.

4. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, recognized the right of children and young people to education. That right must be respected since it was not only in the interest of young people but also that of society as a whole that young people should be educated. It was an investment in the future. Although most of the United Nations Member States had ratified the Convention, it was not being implemented. Whilst it acknowledged that children had specific rights in addition to the fundamental human rights, the most basic rights of children and young people were being ignored. In that regard it was enough to cite the case of children living in shanty towns, street children and child victims of prostitution. The international community should therefore achieve the impossible to ensure that the Convention became more than just words.

5. In all societies the family had primary responsibility for ensuring children's welfare. It must be given the means to do so. However, when there were problems within the family, society must take responsibility for protecting the child. The appointment of an ombudsman or mediator might be the best way of defending young people's interest at the international and at the national levels. It was equally important to encourage the creation of organizations to represent children and young people for all human beings, no matter what their age, sex or race, had the right to make their voices heard.

6. Mr. ALGHANIM (Saudi Arabia) said that the Saudi Government was aware of the crucial importance of social services whether they were provided by the Government or by private organizations. It had therefore mobilized the necessary funds to formulate policies and implement programmes for the disabled. The Ministry of Education, for example, had responsibility within the field of education for persons suffering from a disability whatever the origin of that disability. Throughout Saudi Arabia there were special institutions for the deaf, the blind and the mentally disabled. For its part, the Ministry of Social Affairs dealt with the rehabilitation, training and social security of disabled persons. The Housing Ministry ensured that all citizens, including the disabled, were appropriately housed. The private sector also contributed to social welfare.

7. The Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind was located in Saudi Arabia and its mission was to assist the visually impaired in the country and in the region. The Regional Bureau organized the distribution of books and had set up libraries with works in Braille. It had even provided a transcription of the Koran in Braille. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia was working together with other countries of the region in connection with the social integration of disabled persons.

8. He thanked the Ad Hoc Working Group for the quality of its work in drawing up the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. With regard to the rule on awareness-raising he considered that it was vitally important to encourage greater awareness among Governments and society as a whole of the problems of disabled persons. It was crucial to realize that disabled persons could, if they were given the chance, make a valuable contribution to society. Rule 2, which dealt with medical care, was just as important, since it had been noted that in 60 per cent of cases the disabilities could have been avoided if care had been given in time. In connection with Rule 3 he remarked that rehabilitation and training played a key role in the integration of disabled persons. That also applied to education which was covered by Rule 6. As for employment which was addressed by Rule 7, the lack of possibilities open to disabled persons in that field was due to the fact that society did not know how to benefit from the resources of disabled persons and did not acknowledge that they had the same rights as the rest of the population. It was therefore important in that field, as in others, that disabled persons should enjoy the same advantages as other members of society. With regard to Rule 11, on recreation and sports, it was essential that disabled persons should be able to take up disciplines such as the plastic arts. They should also be able to participate in all sorts of recreational activities including sporting events.

9. The organizations representing the disabled should meet their responsibilities by participating in decision-making which concerned the disabled so as to help Governments accomplish their humanitarian mission. International cooperation between governmental organizations was an important way of assisting disabled persons, in particular in developing countries where 80 per cent of the world's disabled persons lived.

10. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities had met a real need and would be of enormous utility to Governments, particularly those of developing countries which were concerned to

(Mr. Alghanim, Saudi Arabia)

ensure equal rights for disabled persons. He therefore wished to encourage all countries to implement the Rules by making the necessary resources available to that end.

11. Mr. LAZARO (Peru) stated that his delegation was pleased that the first stage of the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development was progressing so well. As anticipated, the Preparatory Committee had held its organizational meeting in April 1993. The question of the Summit had been discussed at the most recent high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council; at its 33rd meeting the Commission for Social Development had devoted much attention to the goals of the Summit; two meetings of experts had taken place on that subject under the auspices of the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden; and the Regional Committees had begun their own preparations. That first phase had yielded three results: conceptual enhancement of the three goals set out in resolution 47/92, recognition of the need for greater participation on the part of non-governmental organizations in the area of social development, and mobilization of the United Nations Secretariat in preparation for the Summit. It also demonstrated the existence of a broad consensus concerning the nature of social development and the interdependence of social integration, poverty reduction, and job creation within the framework of a healthy economic policy and a favourable international financial climate. In that regard, the Secretary-General's report on the World Summit for Social Development, which also discussed the role of the United Nations system in the promotion of social development (E/1993/77), was of particular interest. It also confirmed the need for close cooperation between the State, the society and the market.

12. Peru would prefer the Preparatory Committee to place more emphasis, at its 2nd meeting, on the political dimensions of the question of social development. In its view, social, political and economic questions were linked, and social development had an essential role to play in not only improving the human condition but also in promoting economic progress and creating an environment compatible with political democracy.

13. Up to the present, the United Nations had concentrated mainly on questions related to peace-keeping and international security, at the expense of social progress. Indeed, it had been assumed that social progress would be the logical outgrowth of progress achieved in those spheres. The difficulties currently encountered by the international community in its efforts to resolve conflict had arisen from that miscalculation.

14. The most ambitious initiatives and the best conceived programmes of the United Nations had failed to eliminate the scourge of poverty. This was because two elements had been lacking: a consensus on underlying issues, and the creative will to resolve problems such as intolerance, ethnic cleansing, nationalism, xenophobia and racism, which indubitably had social roots.

15. Taking those elements into account, the Preparatory Committee should, at its 2nd meeting, explore means of integrating the social question into all measures implemented within the context of preventive diplomacy. Peru attached singular importance to that task. In that regard, it suggested that excessively

(Mr. Lazaro, Peru)

dogmatic language should be avoided so as not to diminish the scope of the political message that must issue from the World Summit.

16. In order to ground its work in practical reality, the Committee should consider two characteristics of the contemporary world, the spread of a certain way of life resulting from the communications revolution, and the globalization of the economy. Globalization could facilitate cooperation with regard to world-wide social problems, given the coordination of macroeconomic policy, the promotion of trade, and the protection of the environment.

17. In the view of Peru, a closer and more active relationship should be established with the Bretton Woods institutions. UNDP did, of course, play a decisive role in that field, owing to the working relations that it had established with those institutions in the developing countries. Ideally, a more effective mechanism could be instituted so that all parties could contribute technically as well as politically. At an appropriate moment, his delegation intended to propose that an ad hoc group should be created to study that question.

18. He stated that, having launched a successful anti-inflation and economic stabilization campaign, and attained the re-entry of Peru into the international financial community, his Government had undertaken a broad social programme on behalf of the most disadvantaged groups of society. That programme, designed to assist three and a half million impoverished people, had the following objectives: to create jobs and income sources in marginalized rural and urban zones, to supply food aid to the most vulnerable groups, and to improve the quality of basic health services. It drew on the organizational capacities and collective efforts of low-income population groups, as well as on the participation of Peruvian society as a whole and on various public institutions.

19. In conclusion, he stated that the United Nations needed to demonstrate some imagination and willingness to change if it wished to make the qualitative changes that now as ever were required in the social domain.

20. Mr. EL-DEEB (Egypt) said that the Government of his country accorded high priority to social development in its policies and programmes, drawing upon Egyptian cultural heritage and Islamic culture, the aspiration of the latter of which was to exalt human life on all planes, material and spiritual, in the respect for human rights and the satisfaction of the essential needs of people.

21. In Egypt, community associations and governmental bodies played a primary role in social development. In the view of his delegation, social development and economic development must go hand in hand. Economic growth was indeed indispensable for the creation of an environment compatible with human development and with the implementation of social programmes, like, for instance, social welfare, the creation of jobs, the construction of sanitary housing and education.

22. International cooperation must be strengthened in the area of development in order to achieve a balance between the supply and demand of resources and to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace. Comprehensive plans must be formulated to reduce the gap between rich and poor in the hopes of eliminating the causes

(Mr. El-Deeb, Egypt)

of economic and social conflict, which in turn often bred political and military struggles.

23. Egypt attached great importance to the World Summit for Social Development, and declared its willingness to work with the Preparatory Committee at its 2nd meeting, which was scheduled for early 1994. It had studied document A/48/476 with interest, particularly the parts pertaining to ECA and ESCWA. Furthermore, it reiterated its endorsement of the substance of document A/48/56, on the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies in the Near Future.

24. With regard to disabled people, his delegation considered that they should be fully integrated into society, and supported the provisions in that respect set forth in documents A/C.3/48/L.2 and L.3. It also stressed the importance of the International Year of the Family, to be held in 1994, along with the preparatory meetings, which promised to provide a useful exchange of experience.

25. Population issues were of great significance for social development, and the time had come to undertake substantial programmes in that field. In that regard the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, had a major role to play, and Egypt was fully prepared to cooperate at every level to ensure its success.

26. Ms. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that the issues before the Committee in the current year were particularly important for society everywhere and that their consideration ought to result in the adoption of a substantial number of measures at the local and international levels. Yemen considered it right to place the emphasis on social development and the right to development, the latter having been reaffirmed in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna in June 1993. Her country had high hopes for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995, in that it should be helpful in implementing social principles already adopted at the international level.

27. Her delegation had studied the Secretary-General's report (A/48/56) with great interest and fully supported the statement in paragraph 13 (a) that an effective social policy should further validate individual dignity and worth, and promote consideration of those who were disadvantaged or dysfunctional as unused human resources.

28. The international community should seek to develop effective strategies to help improve the situation of those living in developing countries and narrow the gap between rich and poor countries. Such strategies should be aimed at resolving the world's economic and social problems, promoting growth and contributing to reducing poverty and making full use of human resources.

29. Humankind and the satisfaction of its needs were the raison d'être of growth. The aims of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development were thus very relevant. Social development was a complicated issue and the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit had a difficult task before it, since on it depended the success of the Summit. The Chilean Ambassador, Mr. Somavia, should be congratulated on the role he was playing as Chairman of the

(Ms. Al-Hamami, Yemen)

Preparatory Committee. Social development was increasingly important, at all levels. That was clear from the fact that Governments were reflecting social questions in their development plans and taking more action on social matters, as was indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the International Year of the Family (A/48/293).

30. Her Government was making every effort to link the family with economic and social development, according to the principles of solidarity which formed the basis of Yemeni society, and was preparing to observe the International Year of the Family in 1994. It was to be hoped that the international community would show commitment to resolving the problems that existed in relation to the family in all the countries of the world.

31. Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile), speaking as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, said that the living conditions of peoples throughout the world demonstrated the need to give priority to combating poverty and unemployment and to promoting social integration as essential factors for stability, security and peace. It was a difficult task and, as the Secretary-General had stated in a message to his Committee, new interpretations of social policy and development had to be worked out, encompassing every aspect of life - social, economic and environmental - and efforts had to be made to promote a society in which each individual had the potential and the opportunity to become involved in development.

32. The Economic and Social Council, in its high-level debate on social development, had evidenced a remarkable convergence of views in its analysis of the world social situation and had affirmed that the political importance of social questions fully justified calling a meeting at heads of State level. In its final document the Council had analysed what it called "the social crisis of the 1990s", which was summed up in the core issues on the agenda of the Summit. In that regard he stressed the importance of exchanging information, giving a new direction to social policies and finding innovative formulas for interaction between the social functions of the State, the reactions of the market and the imperatives of sustainable development.

33. The debates had underlined the need for the Summit to produce specific results. Among the measures proposed had been the idea, put forward by some, of an "Agenda for people", which would define the principles of social development, as well as social responsibilities and ways of carrying them out. It would make the improvement of the conditions of life for human beings a central concern, at every level.

34. The preparatory process currently under way was a threefold one. The high level of representation was the most important aspect, given the political nature of the decisions which would have to be adopted and the need to ensure their effective application, as well as the relatively short duration of the proceedings: three sessions of 10 days each. In that regard it would be necessary to press on with negotiations in order to reach substantive decisions that would be binding.

35. Another aspect, linked with the first, was the composition of the Preparatory Committee's Bureau. It was made up of 11 members and would ensure

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

adequate representation for the various regions. He would make sure that the Bureau played its full part in directing the work and following it up, as well as identifying any possible problems and formulating relevant suggestions and recommendations.

36. Important work had already been done both by the United Nations and by the countries themselves. One of the tasks of the Preparatory Committee would be to appraise the situation with regard to the commitments that had been made and to evaluate the prospects offered by the major United Nations programmes of action, including those on health, education and children. The Summit would also give countries the opportunity to assess their social programmes and strategies, to exchange information on their successes and to identify the reasons for any failures.

37. The objectives of the World Summit were to define future priorities in social development and to devise mechanisms to evaluate the progress accomplished in combating poverty, the creation of productive employment and the adoption of measures to deal with such new phenomena as growth without job creation.

38. The issue of the status of women, in all its aspects (integration, the elimination of discrimination and the feminization of poverty and unemployment), was to be seen in that context. It appeared that all examples of successful social policy had promoted the integration of women. Interaction between the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995, should be strengthened forthwith.

39. The situation in the least developed countries, particularly those of Africa where the main themes to be dealt with at the World Summit were of particular relevance, should also be among the major concerns of the Preparatory Committee and of the Summit.

40. He also underlined the importance of resources. The responsibility for financing social development was essentially that of the countries themselves, but it was not possible for all programmes to be financed by means of internal resources. Nor should external sources be limited to funds channelled through cooperation. There were other possibilities and an imaginative approach was required.

41. The presence of heads of State was therefore indispensable at the World Summit. It was they who, at the national level, determined social priorities. The World Summit would offer them a unique opportunity to play that role, with their counterparts, at the international level.

42. At the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee, held in April 1993, a great deal had been accomplished. The decisions adopted related to the practical organization of the Summit (dates, inter-sessional meetings, organization of work, tentative timetable for meetings, topics for sessions). The decisions also dealt with actions to be taken by Member States (national committees, organization of public debates on the main issues, writing of reports, mobilization of voluntary contributions). They also dealt with related matters (participation of non-governmental organizations, meetings of

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

experts). Before the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretariat should launch an information programme on the Summit and have completed the necessary documentation for the Preparatory Committee's work. The Preparatory Committee had almost a year and a half to conduct negotiations and draw up the documents which would be submitted for adoption to the heads of State and Government in Copenhagen in 1995. The process was off to a good start.

43. He felt it necessary, however, to express his concern regarding certain matters. Firstly, he wished to be assured that resources from the regular budget would be allocated to the World Summit, as had been the case for the Conferences dealing with human rights, population and women. That question should be considered in the Fifth Committee. In addition, the regional commissions had been requested in paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 47/92 to study the social situation, to formulate proposals and to prepare an integrated report on the social situation in their region, which would be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session. It was regrettable that the reports which had been submitted, except for that of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, dealt more with questions of procedure than with questions of substance, although in most of the regional commissions high-quality studies had been carried out relating to the questions on the agenda of the Summit.

44. It was important to devote as much energy to the follow-up of the Summit as to its preparation. It was advisable already to think of how to implement the decisions which would be taken at the Summit. The Governments alone would not be responsible for their implementation; civil society would also play an important role, which was why it was important that political parties, business groups, workers, religious denominations, the media, voluntary and non-governmental organizations should be urged to take part in the debates.

45. He endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 15 of the conclusions of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council that the Preparatory Committee should draw away from bureaucratic negotiating styles and adopt an action-oriented format so as to maximize the potential for agreement.

46. While recognizing that the Department of Public Information was trying, within the limits of its resources, to sensitize opinion on social matters, he was concerned that, almost a year after the adoption of the resolution relating to the World Summit, an appropriate information programme had as yet not been drawn up.

47. He urged the participants not to lose sight of the main objective, namely the success of the Summit; those who would most benefit from it were the millions of human beings who lived in conditions which were incompatible with human dignity.

48. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark) observed that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had ended the previous year without any tangible improvement in the situation of the growing number of disabled people. It was therefore extremely urgent to define a global strategy for disability in the year 2000 and beyond. In that connection, it was of the utmost importance that the Third

(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

Committee should keep on its agenda the question of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and remind Member States of their obligations towards such persons. Denmark welcomed the initiative taken by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in proclaiming the period from 1992 to 2002, as the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons.

49. More than a billion people in the world lived in absolute poverty. They included the majority of disabled who lived in developing countries. That was why the eradication of poverty was one of the main objectives of the Danish foreign aid policy. The World Summit for Social Development, which would be held in Denmark in March 1995, would be an opportunity for heads of State and Government to meet for the first time in order to examine questions of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, which were of particular concern to marginalized groups, including the disabled. It was also the first time that NGOs had been invited to play an active role in the preparation of a summit meeting, and the Danish organizations of disabled people intended to do so. Governments ought to contribute financially to NGO activities in relation to the Summit, either by directly financing such activities or by contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Fund to finance NGO participation from the least developed countries.

50. The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June of the current year had represented a milestone for the disabled. It was the first time that disabled people as such had been included in a general human rights document. The Declaration of Vienna asserted the right of all individuals, disabled and otherwise, without restrictions of any nature to the full enjoyment of the rights set forth in the human rights instruments. The Declaration of Vienna had also recognized the right of all to active participation in all aspects of society, which meant that disabled people's right to integration had become a human rights issue. In future, in the event of incapacitated individuals being refused equal opportunities for any reason, the authorities responsible would be called upon to admit that they had infringed the provisions of the Declaration of Vienna.

51. In its resolution 47/88 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to review the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to include an evaluation of the way a society treated its disabled citizens as a factor of the quality of life in that society. In July 1993, UNDP had hosted a meeting at Geneva for the purpose of developing a disability index in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Division. During that informal meeting, at which the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had been represented alongside Nordic organizations of disabled persons, it had been agreed not only to include the disability index in the UNDP Human Development Report, but also to link it to the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities. The best way to combine those elements in the United Nations disability strategy in coming years would be to base the disability index on the standard rules so that each rule received a coefficient from zero to five, depending on the degree of compliance. Once Member States started sending UNDP an annual disability report, it would be able to publish an indicator of the

(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

status of disabled persons in each country. The Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People planned to address that question at the disability session of the World Summit for Social Development. Monitoring was an essential part of any set of rules, no matter how flawless. That was why Denmark supported the appointment of a special rapporteur who would be expressly responsible for monitoring the implementation of the standard rules.

52. The Nordic countries had a long development assistance tradition that was shared by their organizations of disabled persons, which ran third world programmes. However, when those organizations offered their assistance, they failed to elicit interest. He hoped that third world countries would respond positively to the offer of special education programmes, including programmes for disabled children, young people and women. Because of the role played by women in society, programmes for disabled women were especially important.

53. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development and the increased activity in the social development field reflected the importance the United Nations now attached to the provisions of the Charter aimed at promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. She hoped that work in that area would not be disrupted by the transfer to New York of the functions of the former Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna. The United Nations should always be a position to assist Governments seeking to strengthen their capacity to address their social development issues. Such assistance was critical for developing countries, including the members of CARICOM.

54. Helping Governments to integrate the disabled fully into society should be a priority. In that connection, it was evident that the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had not really attained its objectives. It was necessary to move from awareness-raising to action. The standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities, which the CARICOM countries wholeheartedly endorsed, were a step in that direction since they provided for monitoring mechanisms. The CARICOM countries supported the proposal to appoint a special rapporteur on that question, but they were surprised that it was the intention for the work of that special rapporteur to be funded from extrabudgetary resources. It was important to ensure that that work was not halted for lack of contributions. The CARICOM countries thought that the proposal to create a position of interregional adviser on the standard rules was also useful, particularly for developing countries. They believed that, together, the standard rules and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons provided an important framework for national and international action in that area.

55. Nevertheless, the CARICOM States thought it would be useful to develop a long-term strategy in the field of disability based on the report of the group of experts that had met at Vancouver in April 1992. They approved the decision to review the draft strategy at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in order to give Governments more time to make specific proposals for the strategy. Lastly, they supported the proclamation of 3 December as the International Day of Disabled Persons. It was essential to maintain the

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

Voluntary Fund on Disability, which had been most useful during the Decade of Disabled Persons and continued to play an important role.

56. Cooperation with the United Nations in the context of the Decade was proceeding, and continued to produce important results. The International Conference of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities had taken steps to ensure that the activities of the Decade continued to receive attention at the highest political level. Such initiatives were encouraging, and she hoped that measures would be taken to meet the needs of disabled persons more effectively in the years ahead.

57. With respect to older persons, the members of CARICOM saw the global targets on ageing for the year 2001 as a framework for future activities in that area. They were pleased that 1999 had been designated as the International Year of Older Persons and that an International Day for the Elderly had also been established.

58. They hoped that the celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year would give new impetus to the work of the United Nations in that important area. That was why the CARICOM countries were monitoring with interest the work being done by the Commission for Social Development on a draft world youth programme of action to the year 2000 and beyond.

59. The CARICOM States welcomed the efforts being made to prepare for the International Year of the Family, both at the international level, through the Commission for Social Development, which was the preparatory body for the Year, and at the national level, through the coordinating committees established by the countries. Owing to the convergence of a number of socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors, the question of the family had acquired especial importance. The number of single-parent families headed by women continued to rise rapidly. Furthermore, the fact that women earned much less than men had a very negative impact on the standard of living of those families. The International Year of the Family should stimulate Governments to develop comprehensive family policies. Realizing the objectives of the International Year of the Family implied respecting the rights established in such instruments as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which the CARICOM countries had signed or ratified.

60. The members of CARICOM were aware of the partnership role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with Governments and the international community as a whole, and they were pleased to note that the World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family would be held on Malta from 28 November to 2 December 1993.

61. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation illustrated the increasing complexity and seriousness of the difficulties many countries faced as a result of persistent debt, structural adjustment policies and turbulence in the world economy. The members of CARICOM hoped that, with the help of the World Summit for Social Development and the current enthusiasm for social development issues, the next report on the world social situation would be decidedly more positive.

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

62. In that context the CARICOM States believed that the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future adopted in 1987 remained just as relevant today. The issue at the World Summit for Social Development would be to establish priorities. Social problems contributed to political instability, conflict and strife. The World Summit would provide an opportunity for developing a new concept of security which should be people-centred, as the Secretary-General had suggested in his report "An Agenda for Peace". The Summit would also have to bear in mind that the social and economic aspects of development were inseparable. Above all, it would have to try to devise strategies which would assist both the developed countries and the developing countries to find responses to social problems and to give renewed hope to people everywhere.

63. The States of the Caribbean Community intended to participate fully in the Summit and in its preparatory activities. In that connection, it was very important for Governments in a position to do so to contribute to the Trust Fund for the World Summit for Social Development.

64. Mr. RIABIKA (Ukraine) said that the accelerated development of science and technology had not put an end to famine, poverty or disease, that the disparities between developed and developing countries continued to widen, and that in the countries in transition social tensions were increasing in step with unemployment. In the latter countries the situation was sometimes aggravated by armed conflicts which inflicted hardships and privations on the people. At the same time the sharp worsening of the social and economic living standards of a great part of the population was skilfully turned to advantage by some people to further their political ambitions and it was creating new sources of tension. The recent events in Moscow provided one example. The social problems of countries throughout the world, and in particular the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were described in detail in the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation.

65. During his recent visit to Ukraine the Secretary-General of the United Nations had outlined in his address to the Parliament three major areas of United Nations activity: the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of economic and social development, and the observance of human rights. Ukraine fully supported the activities in those areas, which it regarded as equally important and closely interconnected. It believed that the solution of social problems required the coordinated efforts of all States regardless of their level of development, and it therefore welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to hold the World Summit for Social Development which would be focused on social integration, mitigation of poverty, and creation of productive jobs. The Summit was to be held in 1995, the year in which the United Nations would be reviewing a half century of work. The Fourth World Conference on Women was also to be held in 1995, preceded in 1994 by the International Conference on Population and Development and the International Year of the Family. All those events would promote international cooperation in the social field.

66. The countries of Eastern Europe, and Ukraine in particular, were experiencing serious social difficulties. Since the beginning of 1993 the gross national product of Ukraine had decreased by 10 per cent over 1992. Consumer

(Mr. Riabika, Ukraine)

spending had been increasing faster than income. Industrial production continued to decline, and food production had fallen by 15 per cent in comparison with 1992.

67. In such circumstances Ukraine was heavily affected by the consequences of the sanctions imposed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The sanctions had caused Ukraine losses estimated at $3 billion. They had led to a surge in unemployment, lower salaries, and a reduction of navigation on the Danube - all factors which damaged the welfare of the people, in particular the most vulnerable groups: the disabled, pensioners, children and young people. In that connection Ukraine supported the position stated earlier by Bulgaria.

68. Despite the unfavourable circumstances the provision of assistance to disabled persons who were unable to maintain themselves by work was one of the priorities of the Ukrainian Government. The Parliament had adopted a package of laws designed inter alia to protect such persons.

69. Unfortunately, no matter what measures were taken for the social protection of the people, their impact on actual living standards was very small. Ukraine as a whole and the Republic of Crimea in particular had to cope with the specific problem of the social protection of people forcibly deported during the Stalinist era who were now returning to their homelands. More than half a million people - Tartars, Greeks, Armenians, Germans, and people of other nationalities - were preparing to return to the Crimea. That would mean an enormous burden for Ukraine and the Republic of Crimea which they would have to bear alone without having the necessary resources. Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, where those people had lived and participated in the creation of material wealth, ought to contribute to solving the problem.

70. The Ukrainian delegation appreciated the work of the Economic Commission for Europe, which now had 53 member States, in the area of social development and cooperation and in particular the activities carried out in 1993, including the European Population Conference and in March 1993 in Geneva, the Preparatory Meeting for Europe and North America for the International Year of the Family held in April 1993 in Valetta, Malta, and the Conference of European Ministers responsible for social affairs which took place in June 1993 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

71. The time had come for the United Nations to move on from the empirical analysis of social problems to the exploration of the possibilities of furnishing practical assistance to improve the social situation in the world.

72. Mr. USWATTE-ARATCHI (Chief of the Development Analysis Branch of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) said that he would first respond to the comments made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia. With regard to the first comment, concerning the delay in publishing the Report on the World Social Situation, an explanation had been given in document E/1993/24 addressed to the Economic and Social Council. As to the second comment, that the Secretariat had not indicated the source of the information contained in the Report on the World Social Situation, the publication did not contain a single table which did not

(Mr. Uswatte-Aratchi)

carry an indication of the source of the information. A cursory examination of the document would demonstrate that point. The third comment had been to the effect that the Report did not contain any new information and depended on material contained in other reports. The Committee should refer to paragraph 13 of resolution 45/87 entitled "World social situation", in which the General Assembly invited United Nations bodies to provide "all relevant information pertaining to their respective spheres of competence". The author of the Report on the World Social Situation had used that information and had duly cited his sources. It was difficult to see how a report on the world social situation could be written without using information from ILO, UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations Statistical Office, and the Population Division. All similar reports, such as the Human Development Report or the World Development Report, depended on such data. The representative of Colombia had also pointed to the need to improve the Report on the World Social Situation. No one could disagree. The 1993 Report was a substantial improvement over the 1989 Report, which he had also written, and it was to be hoped that the 1997 Report would be even better. In any event, even if it was not perfect, the Report was at least useful. That was demonstrated by the fact that in August 1993 an order had been received for 210 copies but supplies had already run out. If the market was the final arbiter, the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation was not too bad a publication.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.